SUPPLEMENT
TO THE
South-Carolina Gazette.

Numb. 242.

Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right. JESUS CHRIST.

Mr. TIMOTHY,

THat Controversy has, too frequently, an unhappy Influence, to divert Mens Minds from Attention to their Duty, is an old Complaint, and which we find but too much verified, by our own daily Experience. How often is it seen, not only to divert Mens Minds from their own particular Duty, and the Pursuit of their chiefest Good, but that too by means, no ways to be justified!

To search after Truth, and to embrace it where ever it is found, is the indispensible Duty of every rational Agent; but to be so far influenc'd by the unhappy Spirit of Controversy, as to endeavour to evade the Force of Truth, meerly thro' a Spirit of Opposition, or for the Sake of adhering to old favourite Opinions, or because the contrary Doctrine is inconsistent with our own particular Schemes, or the Notions in which we have been educated, and which we dare not examine, least we should see the Necessity of renouncing them; is a Practice not at all agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason, or consistent with the Title, which we are so fond of arrogating to our selves, of *Lovers of Truth* and *sincere Worshippers of the God of it*. And yet, how distant soever such a Practice is from our Duty, and that Candour and *Sincerity*, which ought to be the governing Principle of our Lives, it is beyond all paradventure certain, that Men are frequently, when engaged in *Polemics*, govern'd by a Spirit of Party and Contradiction, by a blind Zeal for maintaining their own *narrow Schemes* and Opinions, in Opposition to Truth, and too frequently against the Convictions of their own Consciences.

That this Observation is just, how severe so ever it may seem, we have the Acknowledgment of a famous controversial Writer, no less than an *Ancient* (I will not say a *Reverend*) *Father*, who has had so little Modesty, as to own in plain Terms, "*That in his* Polemic "Works *he had no other Aim, but to get the* "*better of his Adversary, without the least Con-* "*cern that what he advanced were true or false.*

Whether this has been the Case, or is the Opinion of your late Correspondent of the 3d *Instant (August)*, in the Controversy concerning the *Immorality* of the Practice of *Inoculation*, or of any *others* whose Correspondence you have been favour'd with, on any of the collateral Disputes occasioned by that Question, is what I shall not now presume to judge, and which I have too much Charity to believe of *them*: I have only said thus much, to shew the Necessity we are under, of paying a due Regard to that Dictate of our *blessed Saviour* (the Foundation of our Christian Liberty,) in the Text I have chosen for the Motto of this Paper; namely of judging for ourselves what is right in the present, as well as all other Debates of Consequence; and not being too much captivated with any *seeming* Reasons or Plausibility in the Arguments used in the present Controversy, without first carefully examining the Force of them. And this I imagine necessary, and more especially at this Time, as the Matter is brought to Issue before us, which is plainly, (however it may be endeavour'd to be disguised) this, *Whether it be lawful to save Life or not, by Means, of which we are not expressly forbid the Use?* For since the Divines cannot agree therein, the *Laity* ought most certainly (we have the Authority of a very great *Divine* for it) to judge in it for themselves. It is better indeed, in most Cases, where the Rules of Charity oblige us not to the contrary, to let them alone in their Differences: But in such Cases, as is the present, where from the Importance of them, we are under a Necessity of declaring on one side or the other, the Rule, if I mistake not, is to judge for Ourselves, and embrace that side of the Question which is the *safest*, or most pious, charitable and useful. And since the Act of right judging necessarily infers a previous Examination, we no doubt should consider what has been offer'd for and against this Practice: And upon such Consideration I imagine it will appear, that the Practice of *Inoculation* is not only the safest, but also

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so the most pious, charitable and useful: But in this, as I pretend only to judge for myself, every one else will use the same Liberty; and, if they please, judge me in the wrong in my present Sentiments.

That the Practice of *Inoculation* 'is the best (and if so, then the safest) 'means hitherto known or discovered for 'abating the Rage and avoiding the Danger of that fatal 'Disease the *Small-Pox*," is asserted by the *learned Author* of the Letter in the *Gazette* Numb 232, and is admitted, as it is not controverted by *Philirenus*. He only argues against the *Morality* of the Practice, and holds it to be *most immoral*, 'because (as he says) *it is an Encroachment* 'on the Prerogative of Almighty God, *and an Invasion of* 'His *Province as Ruler of the World.*" But his Argument to prove this, to me appears very defective, nor will the Foundation he has laid, by any means support the Superstructure he has raised upon it. He builds upon this, '*That* '*it is the Prerogative of God and the Work of his Providence* 'to preserve *whom he will* from *the actual Attack of any Dis-* 'temper" Which Doctrine admitted, as it certainly must, proves *too much* for the present Debate, and therefore, according to the Rule in such Cases, it proves nothing at all. For, taking the Position in its full Extent, and you'll find it run against the Use of *any Means* for the Preservation of Life *in any Distemper*; and as effectually proves the *Immorality* of taking the *Peruvian Bark* for the Prevention of the Fever, as the *Immorality* of inoculating with a favourable, to prevent our taking a more malignant Sort of the *Small-Pox*: For is it not as much the Prerogative of God, to preserve whom he will *in* or *under* the actual Attack of any Distemper, as it is to preserve whom he pleases *from* such Attack? And is it not as much an Encroachment on this unquestionable and sovereign Right of God, as this Gentleman affects to speak, to attempt *to remove* what he hath actually, (for Afflictions, I presume *Philirenus* will own, come not forth of the Dust) and no doubt for wise Ends and Purposes, brought upon us; as to endeavour to take a Distemper, (*which we are not certain*, but *only apprehend* he purposes to save us from,) in a more safe and favourable Degree than such Diseases are otherwise commonly taken? If there be any *Immorality* in either of these Cases, surely the *first* seems much more *immoral* than the *last*; in as much as by using Means to remove what *we know* God has actually inflicted upon us, we thereby plainly and directly *combat* the express Order and Direction of our great Creator, the Governor of the World; whereas by bringing on the Distemper by Inoculation, we cannot with any Justice be said to run counter to what *we know* to be the express Will and Declaration of God; unless we could be *infallibly assured* (and which I suppose *Philirenus* will not undertake to assure us) that we are of the Number of those, whom the Prerogative of God will by the Work of his Providence preserve from the actual Attack of this Distemper. I say, arguing upon this Gentleman's Principles, I apprehend the first Case I have put above, to wit, the Using Means to remove any Distemper actually inflicted by God upon us, is so much more *immoral* than the last, namely the bringing any Distemper upon ourselves (even *prima instantia*) in a moderate Degree, in order to preserve Life, by avoiding the same Distemper in a more dangerous manner, by how much the offending against a plain, direct and positive Declaration of the Will of God is more criminal, than offending, if indeed it be an Offence, against what we can only *infer* or *conclude*, upon *loose* and *precarious* Reasoning, to be his Will.

How shall we say then? Shall we, when the Hand of God is upon us in any Distemper, use no means for the Preservation of those Lives God has graciously bestowed upon us, to be employed in his Service, for the Advancement of his Glory and our own eternal Benefit and Advantage, or be involved under the unhappy Dilemma of running counter to the Will of our *great Creator* and most *merciful Preserver*, by impiously encroaching on his unquestionable and sovereign Right in the Government of the World? —— God forbid! —— On the contrary, to me it appears evident, that we should much more offend the *Divine Majesty* by entertaining such *mean* and *unworthy* Thoughts of *Him*; and by not making use of all those Methods which God in his good Providence hath been pleased to discover, for the Preservation of our Lives, until such Time as it shall please him to require them at our Hands.

'Tis not pretended, that the Practice of Inoculation is any where forbid us by God; nor, on the other Hand, is it alledged that we have any direct Precept (*totidem Verbis*) for it: But then it was not necessary there shou'd be any such Precept, 'Since (to borrow the Words of a celebrated 'Moralist *and Divine* of the last Century) *we cannot, unless* 'where *Reason is defective, or violently abused, need Laws of* 'Self preservation, *for that is the Sanction and great Bond* 'and *Endearment of all Laws.*' and, 'Nature *and her Needs* 'are *sufficient to cause us to do that which is for her Preservation.* 'Right Reason and Experience *being a competent Warrant* 'and *Instruction to conduct our Affairs of Liberty and common* 'Life.' And therefore, unless it can be shewn by some express Declaration of the Will of the Diety, that we ought not to go into this Practice, for the Preservation of our Lives, we surely *lawfully may*. 'For (still to use the Words and Reasoning of the same great Man) 'by Nature 'all Things are indulged for our Use and Liberty, and they so 'remain until God by a supervening Law hath made Restraints 'in some Instances, to become Matter of Obedience to him, and 'of Order and Usefulness to the World; but, therefore, where 'the Law does not restrain, we are still free as the Elements, 'and may move as indifferently as the Atomes in the Eye of the 'Sun, and there is infinite Difference between Law and lawful; 'indeed there is nothing that is a Law to our Consciences, 'but what is bound upon us by God, and consigned in 'holy Scripture: And therefore every Thing else is per- 'mitted that is not by Law restrained: Liberty is before Re- 'straint, and till the Fetters are put upon us, we are under no 'Law, no Necessity but what is natural.' From all which I think I may safely conclude that in the present Case, tou'd there be nothing more said in Support of the Practice than, *that it is not forbid*, it would be sufficient to establish the *Morality* of it.

But says *Philirenus*, every thing that is *immoral* is forbid; and this is *immoral*, because inconsistent with our Duty of trusting to Providence; and therefore this is also forbid. That his Notions of *Morality* are pretty extraordinary, appears from the Instance he hath given of them in the present Debate: But let us not be surprized at them; they have their Parallel, and that too in a *Divine*, and no less a Man than *Tertullian*, from whom, 'tis not improbable, *Philirenus* borrowed his Notions of the Prerogative of God in this Particular, and of Offences against it. Indeed *Tertullian* pretended the Authority of Scripture for the Foundation of his Opinion, which was, that it was the Prerogative of God *to deliver* such of his Servants as he *thought fit*, when under Accusation; and therefore he condemn'd Self-defence even against an unjust Agressor, as a Thing contrary to Christian Patience. '*But*, says the celebrated Author from whom I borrow this Remark) '*his Reasons for this Pur-* 'pose are as remarkably weak, *as his Maxim is* rigorous and 'overstrain'd. *He*, (Tertullian) *says, that the Gospel, without* 'reserve, *forbids us to render Evil for Evil, from whence he draws* 'this (*obscur'd*) *Conclusion, that it is encroaching on the Prero-* 'gative of God (*how mean to* Philirenus's *own Words!*) *and the* 'Homages *due to him, to arrogate to our selves the Power of* 'Self *defence as oft as we judge it necessary: For that* JESUS 'CHRIST, *when he says*, judge not that you be not judg- 'ed, *he demands and expects a Patience carried even to the* 'Point *of not defending one's self against unjust Accusations.*' And no doubt, *Tertullian* with as much Reason might say, that it was encroaching on the Prerogative of God for a Christian, to defend himself under an unjust Accusation, as *Philirenus* could assert, that to inflict a Distemper upon one's self, *prima instantia*, (tho' it be done in order to preserve Life) is an Encroachment on God's unquestionable and sovereign Right: For surely, it is as much the Prerogative of God to save his Servants from Condemnation, when *under* an unjust Accusation, as it is to preserve whom he will *from* the actual Attack of any Distemper.

But that the Practice of Inoculation is not only far from being *immoral*, but on the Contrary, is most pious and useful, to me seems more plainly to appear, by considering that there is not only no Prohibition against it, but that it is exercised only in the greatest Necessity, and for the Preservation of that Life which God has been graciously pleased to bestow upon us, to be employed in his Service, for the Advancement of his Glory, and our own eternal Benefit and Advantage. 'Indeed (to borrow the Reasoning of another celebrated Author) 'if a Man would live only for im-

self, we confess, it would be convenient that he should be left to his own Disposal, and be allowed to do whatever he would with himself: But since, by the universal Consent of all wise Men, it is acknowledged, that the Almighty Creator made Man to serve him, and to set forth his Glory in a more illustrious Manner, by improving the good Things committed to his Trust; and since Society, for which Man is form'd, and to enjoy which, is one End of his being sent into the World, cannot be well exercised and maintained, unless every one, as much as in him lies, take Care of his own Preservation (the Safety of the whole Society of Mankind being a Thing inconsiderable, if the Safety of each particular Number were an indifferent Part) it manifestly appears, that a Man, by throwing open all Care of his own Life, is highly injurious to Almighty God, to the general Body of Mankind, and in consequence thereof to his own everlasting Happyness.' And how any Person can avoid the Imputation of throwing aside all Care of his own Life, when he will not use the safest and best Means to preserve it in Time of Danger, and the Raging of so fatal a Distaste as is the Small-Pox in general, is submitted to the serious and impartial Consideration of those, who are not only guilty of the Omission themselves, but who also persuade others to the same hazardous Neglect.

Would it not, (I would *gravely* ask *Philirenus*) be accounted the most extreme Act of Imprudence & Folly, not to say Presumption, in a Pilot, who had the Care and Charge of a Ship, and who ever so much held the Truth of this Position, that it was the Prerogative of God, and the Work of his Providence, to preserve whom he will from the Raging of the Sea, and the Violence of the Waves thereof, and who ever so firmly believed, that the Winds and the Waters were but obedient to his Almighty Word; would it not, I say, be great Presumption in such a Man, overtaken in a Storm, to continue to pursue his Voyage (and neglect to take Shelter in some friendly Port, when it might be easily obtained, but still to sail on) at the Risque of his Fortune, the manifest Hazard of his Life, and the future Happyness of all those who depended upon him? Would not such a Conduct as this deserve a very severe Imputation of Folly and Presumption? 'No, answers *Philirenus* boldly; (at least so much without Violence may be fairly inferr'd from his Argument;) 'he ought to *brave it out*, and not impiously encroach on the Prerogative of God or the Work of his 'Providence, in using any Means for avoiding the Dangers of the Storm: For it is the sole Prerogative of 'God, and the Work of his Providence, to save whom 'he pleases from perishing by Sea. And it is utterly inconsistent to acknowledge it to be so, and at the same 'Time to attempt to save ourselves by our own Act!' And we ought to tremble at the Thought of denying God the 'Honour of a Right, which undoubtedly belongs to him 'as Lord of the Universe!'

Good Lord! What Ideas must this Man have of the Deity! sure he can never contemplate *him* as the Father of all Mercies; nor consider *him* under any Character but that of being *a jealous God*! But, under Favour to *Philirenus*, *St. Paul's* Example ought to have taught him otherwise; for he, who, I imagine it will be easily granted, believed, at least, as much of the Providence of God, and was as far from encroaching on his Prerogative as *Philirenus*, was of other Sentiments, when in his Voyage to *Rome he found sailing was become dangerous*, by reason of the Seasons being so far spent, was for Wintering in the *fair Havens*, and avoiding the Dangers that after befel them in that Voyage: And surely he did not thereby incur the Blame of distrusting the good Providence of God, or limitting the Power of the Almighty.

The learned Author of the Letter in the Gazette before cited might very justly infer the Legality of the Practice of Inoculation, from the Blessing of God in the apparent happy Success that had attended it: '*But by no* '*Means* (says *Philirenus*) '*for no* Moralist *or* Divine *can ever* 'be allowed to have Recourse to Success attending Men's Actions, 'when his Business is to prove the Morality *of those very Actions*; 'because [pray mark the Reason] *no Success can ever make an* 'Action lawful, *the* immorality *of which* [*Action*] *can be* 'made to appear from its own proper Nature.' That is in other Words, no *immoral* Action can be proved by *any* Means to be *moral*, as long as from its own proper Nature it can be proved to be *immoral*. And that is, in fewer Words, so long as it continues to be *immoral* it cannot be *moral*. A mighty Discovery truly, and worthy the Genius of this Author! But understanding this Assertion in the Sense I will imagine it intended, namely, that we are not to judge of the *Morality* of Actions from the *Success* attending such Actions; I would ask why we may not, at least in the present Case, reason *from* the *Success* to the *Morality* of such Action? What hinders but that we may safely conclude, as such happy Success has attended this Practice, that it must have had the Benediction of God upon it, at least that it was not offensive to the *Deity*, and consequently cannot be *immoral*? I shall presently be told, that wicked Men and wicked Actions often prosper and succeed in this World; and that it would be contrary to Truth, to assert that such Men were good or moral Men, judging alone from their Prosperity, when their *Immorality* might be made appear from a thousand Instances.—That the *Royal Psalmist* tells us, that he saw the wicked in great Prosperity, flourishing like a green Bay Tree; or to that Effect. And therefore, as we cannot conclude from the happy Success attending these Mens Affairs, that they were *righteous* or *moral* Men; so neither ought we from the Success attending other Actions to infer or conclude the *Morality* of such Actions. To which, I think, may be replied, that in judging of the *Morality* of Men or Actions, from the Success attending each, the whole Case, Time, and Circumstance of such Success should be considered; and when this is done, I conceive we may very safely judge of the *Morality* of Men and Actions from the Success, when we perceive Happiness or Success attending the Agents thro' the whole Term of their Existence, or their *fully* accomplishing the End for which they were designed. And was *that* the Case of *wicked* or *immoral* Men, tho' I could not, so long as *I knew* they were *immoral*, say they were *moral* or *good* Men; I shou'd not in the least hesitate, nor scruple to conclude, that I was mistaken in the Nature of the Actions which I had *thought* to be *immoral*. But *that*, we are assured by holy Writ, is not the Case: For let us but take the State of the wicked Man *entire*, and we are very certain, that upon the *Whole* he cannot be said to be *happy*, nor his Way to be *prosperous*. The *Psalmist* tells us, that when he beheld the *Wicked* in that *seeming* flourishing State, that he perceived *they* stood but in *slippery Places*,—That *they* were cast down to *Destruction*, and brought into *Desolation*, as in a Moment. And that they were *utterly consumed* with Terrors. Surely then their Actions cannot be justly said to be *prosperous*, nor their Ways to be attended with *Success*, even here in this mortal State; much less then can *they* be said to be so, when we consider *them* thro' the whole Term of their Existence.

Now if we consider the above Rule, and apply this Reasoning to the Case before us, we shall find on the Contrary, *that* it is attended with all the Happiness and *Success* that the Nature of the Thing will *bear* or *admit*: That is, it answers the full End which is ever proposed to be attained by it: *It* with the Blessing of God (*Philirenus* must allow me the Expression, tho' I perceive it does not please him,) but *Inoculation*, I say, under the *Benediction of Heaven*, saves the Life of Man, by preventing his taking that fatal Disease in the common dangerous Way. Had it indeed not this *Success*, or if it could be sufficiently made appear, that any Person, taking the Distemper by *Inoculation*, was ever subject to it again in the natural Way, any more than he is after once having had it in the natural Way, I would contend no further, but immediately give up the Point, as then the Argument from the Success would be wholy defeated.

And now I imagine it appears, that I may very justly have Recourse to the Success attending this Practice, in order, one way, to prove the *Morality* of it; and which will be further evident by rightly distinguishing between Action and Action. The *learned Author*, whom *Philirenus* opposes, and who is very far from needing any of my Assistance in the present Controversy, never insinuated, that we ought or might have Recourse to *Success*, to prove the *Morality* of *any* Action, whether it was in its own Nature moral or immoral; for it is, and ever will be allowed, that an Action in its own Nature *immoral*, or as the Lawyers term it, *evil in it self*, and apparently wicked, such as that of *Jezabel* towards *Naboth* on Account of his Vineyard, can by no Success attending it change its Nature and *become moral*: But an Action not clouthed with any *Turpitude*, but even in its own